

INDEPENDENT ADOPTION PROGRAM

FACT SHEET

CHANGES FOR ALL INDEPENDENT ADOPTION PETITIONS FILED IN CALIFORNIA ON OR AFTER OCTOBER 1, 2008:

- The California Department of Social Services (CDSS) or delegated county adoption agency (Alameda, Los Angeles, San Diego) is required to investigate all Independent Adoption Petitions and submit a final report to the court with its findings within 180 calendar days, as long as full payment has been received.
- After the petition is filed with the court, the petitioner must mail a copy **and** 50% of the fee to one of the seven CDSS District Offices or to one of the three delegated county adoption agencies.
 - The 180-day time-frame will begin once CDSS or the delegated county adoption agency has received a copy of the filed petition **and** 50% of the fee.
- The fee for the cost of the investigation of an Independent Adoption petition is \$4,500.
- The fee for the cost of the investigation of an Independent Adoption petition for a family with a completed, approved pre-placement evaluation is \$1,550. The pre-placement evaluation must meet the requirements of Family Code Section 8811.5.
- The remaining 50% of the fee must be paid no later than the date determined by the CDSS or the delegated county adoption agency. The CDSS or delegated county adoption agency cannot file the final court report until the remainder of the fee is paid.
- The fee for all Independent Adoption investigations is non-refundable.
- Requests for fee waivers will no longer be accepted.
- The fee may be reduced in some cases where the prospective adoptive parent(s) is at or below the very low income limits according to the income limits published by the Department of Housing and Community Development (<http://www.hcd.ca.gov/hpd/hrc/rep/state/incNote.html>), **and** making the required payment would be detrimental to the welfare of an adopted child. However, in no case will the fee be reduced to less than \$500. Prior to filing a petition with the court, petitioners may contact CDSS at (916) 651-8089 to determine if they may qualify for a fee reduction.
- Adopting families may be eligible for a tax credit for qualifying expenses paid to adopt an eligible child (<http://www.irs.gov/taxtopics>). Please consult your tax advisor.
- Certain criminal offenses will now **require** the CDSS or delegated county adoption agency to recommend denial of the petition. Petitioners with a history of criminal offenses should check the CDSS website to verify whether any offense listed will prevent them from receiving a favorable recommendation.



If you have any questions, please contact the CDSS Adoptions District Office or the delegated county adoption agency (Alameda, Los Angeles, or San Diego) in your area for more information. You may also check CDSS' website at www.childsworld.ca.gov.

